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TAGS: [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [PREL](#) [EUN](#)
SUBJECT: EU MILITARY STAFF HEAD ON OPPORTUNITIES FOR
U.S.-EU RELATIONS

REF: USEU-TODAY 5/13/09

Classified By: Charg d'Affaires Christopher Murray for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

[¶1.](#) (C//NF) Summary: On May 13, Lt. Gen. David Leakey, Director General of the EU Military Staff, briefed USEU's Charg and political officers on military aspects of the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP), and the outlook for NATO-EU relations. Leakey was pessimistic on the prospects for improved NATO-EU relations. He said that diplomatic efforts to improve formal cooperation tend to backfire by providing Greece and Turkey with opportunities for political grandstanding. NATO is now a poor conduit for U.S.-EU relations, he argued, citing the lack of an EU-U.S. security agreement in Afghanistan as a concrete example of the problem. How could it be in the U.S. interest, he asked, to try to channel a military relationship with Europe through an institution where Turkey blocks cooperation?

[¶2.](#) (C//NF) Leakey suggested that by engaging the EU bilaterally, the U.S. is better able to leverage the EU's capabilities to U.S. advantage. The EU can fill what he termed "gaps in the market" when NATO is not the appropriate tool or is politically unable to launch an operation. The U.S., he said, should set aside any remaining "NATO only" theology in order to use ESDP to our advantage. End Summary.

Don't Shed Light on NATO-EU Relations...

[¶3.](#) (C//NF) On May 13, Lt. Gen. David Leakey, Director General of the EU Military Staff, met with USEU's Charg and Mission PolOffs to provide views on the evolution of the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) and NATO-EU relations. Leakey referred several times to his April visit to Washington and seemed to echo many of the themes he presented there. Leakey offered a pessimistic assessment of NATO-EU relations and stressed that new initiatives, non-papers, and conferences would not improve NATO-EU

relations. He said that new announcements of an improved relationship have in fact the opposite impact. As senior EU and NATO officials try to cast light on positive existing areas of informal cooperation, such statements make it more difficult to pursue staff-to-staff contacts, he argued, since both Greece and Turkey are growing increasingly combative on NATO-EU cooperation and use any opportunity for political grandstanding, in the form of impeding NATO-EU cooperation.

...But Don't Be Hamstrung By Them, Either

¶4. (C//NF) The existence of NATO-EU problems should not weaken the U.S. ability to leverage the EU, Leakey suggested, noting that the U.S. benefits from the contributions of ESDP missions in situations where it does not make sense for the U.S. or NATO to be involved. Reflecting on his trip to Washington and conversations with U.S. officials in Brussels, Leakey wondered why some Americans still advocate that the U.S. run its military relationship with Europe, including the EU, principally through NATO. How could it be in the U.S. interest, he asked, to channel its work through an institution where Turkey blocks cooperation? Leakey bluntly noted that Turkey and the U.S. were the only two countries that had not signed security agreements with the EUPOL Afghanistan mission.

¶5. (S//NF) Given the blockage on NATO-EU cooperation, Leakey said that NATO was "not a good conduit" for the

U.S.-EU relationship. Bilateral U.S.-EU military cooperation is required. He cited as a positive step the decision of the United States to share intelligence directly with the EU's

counter-piracy operation ATALANTA. Fears that ESDP will somehow usurp NATO are ill-founded, he said, because European Allies will not let NATO wither.

ESDP Can "Fill Gaps"

¶6. (C//NF) In addition to discussing the present state of NATO-EU relations, Leakey described the evolution of ESDP from 1998 to the present, saying that the EU was now able to "fill gaps in the market" for international security. Beginning with its operation in Macedonia in 2003 and culminating with its first naval operation off the coast of Somalia in 2008, he noted that the EU had undertaken six military operations in six years. Despite being what he described himself as a "NATO baby, Euro-skeptic Brit," Leakey said ESDP is able to fill the void when NATO and the UN are not capable or appropriate for a military operation. In Chad, for example, he said the international community had been searching for an organization to launch a peacekeeping and humanitarian operation, and President Deby opposed the idea of a UN operation. The EU was able not only to launch an operation, but to tie that operation to its political and development support to the Government of Chad, Leakey said. In the case of Bosnia, he noted that the U.S. was able to use the EU to free up American forces for operations elsewhere. In Georgia, he said NATO was not an appropriate tool to monitor the ceasefire, and the OSCE was incapable due to Russian membership and its veto. The EU, however, was able to launch a monitoring mission and to deploy personnel quickly and effectively. In the case of piracy, he said that the EU was heavily engaged and probably would remain so beyond December 2009. The EU, he acknowledged, still has not mastered the "comprehensive approach," but it is doing better than many individual states are.

¶7. (C//NF) Comment: Leakey's comments on "filling gaps" serve as an invitation for us to leverage the EU to reduce the burden on U.S. forces. If we want to exercise that leverage, Leakey implied that we need to engage the EU bilaterally and across the whole of the USG -- working around the blockage on NATO-EU relations as other U.S. Allies do.

End Comment.

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